

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 02278 091345Z
ACTION AF-10

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AGENCY FOR IOP/M, IAA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: N/A
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT CARTER'S STUMBLING BLOCKS.

1. DIFFICULTY IN SOLVING COMPLEX DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECLINE IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S POPULARITY IN THE U.S., SAYS ASSISTANT EDITOR OWANDJINKOY LOKOLAKONGE IN A FRONT PAGE COMMENTARY IN KINSHASA EVENING DAILY ELIMA MARCH 8. AFTER NOTING A RECENT POLL WHICH INDICATES THAT ONLY 34 PER CENT OF AMERICANS ARE NOW SATISFIED WITH MR. CARTER'S PERFORMANCE AS PRESIDENT, COMPARED TO 65 PER CENT TWO MONTHS AFTER HE ASSUMED THE PRESIDENCY, ASSISTANT EDITOR OWANDJINKOY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THIS DECLINE IS NORMAL BECAUSE MOST AMERICAN PRESIDENTS EXPERIENCE IT A FEW MONTHS AFTER THEY TAKE OFFICE.

2. THE ASSISTANT EDITOR BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT THE DECLINE IS DUE TO WHAT HE CALLS PRESIDENT CARTER'S TWO MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS: DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. ON DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, HE CITES THE FORCED RESIGNATION OF BUDGET DIRECTOR LANCE AND THE LACK OF PROGRESS ON AN ENERGY BILL WHICH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC INTERPRETS AS A LACK OF PERSONAL INFLUENCE ON THE PART OF THE PRESIDENT TO
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 02278 091345Z

IMPOSE HIS WILL ON THE CONGRESS.

3. REGARDING THE ROLE PLAYED BY FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN THE DECLINE, MR. OWANDJINKOY INDICATES THAT BY SIGNING A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY IN WHICH THE U.S. IS TO LOSE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CANAL IN THE YEAR 2000, THE PRESIDENT LOST THE SUPPORT OF THE CONSERVATIVES. HE ALSO POINTS OUT THE SLOW PACE OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE

NEGOTIATIONS, THE DECLINING EMPHASIS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE,
THE LACK OF AGREEMENT ON SALT NEGOTIATIONS AND THE CONTINUING
SALES OF AMERICAN ARMS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA
AND EGYPT.

4. ASSISTANT EDITOR OWANDJINKOY CONCLUDES THAT AS AMERICANS CONSIDER
ALL THESE FACTORS AND AS THEY COMPART THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO
THE FIERY IDEALISM THAT CHARACTERIZED THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
CAMPAIGN, THEY GET THE IMPRESSION THAT MR. CARTER HAS LOST
MOMENTUM. ITEM
DUMAS

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